

SOUTH AMERICA ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH NEWSLETTER

149th issue, May 10, 2010

Peru: GEF financed project to asses technology needs for Peru to cope with climate change

By Esteban Sandoval

REO Specialist attended a meeting of the UNEP Committee on Climate Change hosted by Peru’s Environment Ministry on April 19, 2010. Focused on UNEP’s Climate Change Strategy the GEF funded initiative will facilitate a shift towards cleaner and more efficient energy systems and support climate change resilient sustainable development mainly in developing nations. It entails a TNA (Technology Needs Assessment) Project that will identify and prioritize technologies that can contribute to the goals of adaptation and mitigation of participating countries (Peru, Argentina, Guatemala and Costa Rica). There will also be a TAP (Technology Action Plan) for proposals to implement the work plan that countries have identified.

The TNA Project will include four basic blocks or steps:

Step 1: Prioritize Technologies under a multi criteria analysis. This step of the process will identify sectors or subsectors (2-3 sectors) which Peru wants to work on mitigation and adaptation, what is the knowledge/expertise of the main stakeholders and the selection of 4-8 technologies by groups of informed stakeholders.

Step 2: Barrier Analysis (Legal, Institutional, Social Knowledge.) This step analyses market capabilities for each selected technology identifying barriers for enhanced deployment. The approach followed in this stage will entail formation of workgroups per technology for analytical steps, establishment of workshops with the technology stakeholder group, and grouping barriers into categories prioritizing each one of them (Legal, Institutional, etc.)

Step 3: Policy Options – enabling framework (Legal, Institutional, Finance.) This step analyses Economic Incentives (tax exemptions, subsidies), Institutional Changes (energy efficiency, renewable energy – agencies, funds), and Legal Changes (standards, building codes, lighting standards, blending targets.)

Step 4: Technology Action Plan (Prioritized Policy options)

This step establishes prioritized set of actions to enhance market penetration and includes a political component to secure the buy in by the government.

Advances and needs identified will be presented within the COP16 meeting in Mexico in December and the overall project will last 30 months finishing in April 2012. As part of the project, there will be a Workshop on the July – August 2010 timeline for all the regional participants in the project. UNEP’s Regional Centers will serve as support participating countries in mitigation and UNEP is currently working on selecting the center that will provide support on adaptation.

Argentina: About 900 industries are operating in the Mendoza river basin

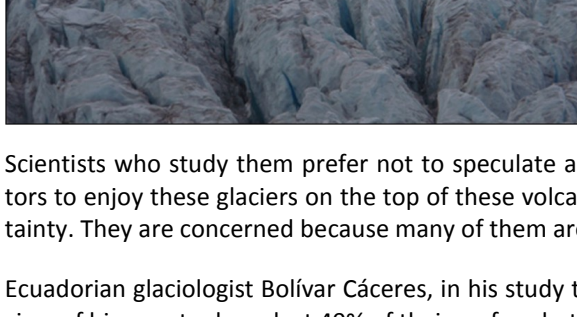
Potable water pollution by mercury in the Gran Mendoza, some weeks ago, unveiled a well-known secret: the vulnerability of hydric system of this important urban center. Riverbeds and open channels exposed to alluvium landslides, to tons of urban waste, to soil pollution, which reach the potable water treatment plants or the irrigation areas. Along its course, crude water finds on its shores the action of 900 industrial plants. This happens in the basin of the Mendoza River.

Beyond the current responsibility interference among the government entities, one suspended private company (Keghat S.A.) and the judicial investigation; the real problem is more serious and sector specialists are concerned. Thus, two proposals have arisen to protect the hydric resource. The first one proposes to pipe 40 kilometers of the water course up to the water treatment points, which would require a USD18 million investment. The second one involves the expansion of Lujan I and Lujan II treatment plants, and send the potable water to storage facilities.

Read more at <http://www.losandes.com.ar/notas/2010/4/25/sociedad-486142.asp>

Ecuador: Glaciers’ retreat

By James Painter



Since German ecologist Alexander Von Humboldt visited Ecuador in 1802, thousands of people have followed his steps attracted by the impressive volcanoes, like Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, and Cayambe.

Scientists who study them prefer not to speculate about how many decades remain for the visitors to enjoy these glaciers on the top of these volcanoes. They say that there is too much uncertainty. They are concerned because many of them are reducing very fast.

Ecuadorian glaciologist Bolívar Cáceres, in his study to be published this year, points out that glaciers of his country have lost 40% of their surface between 1956 and 2006.

As an example, the Cotopaxi -with its well-known cone shape- has lost 40% of its ice since 1976. Antizana Glacier, a close volcano, has also retreated a similar percentage in 50 years.

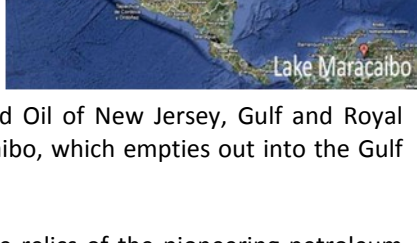
"There was a clear acceleration since the '80", Cáceres says, "which is consistent with what is happening in tropical glaciers in other parts of South America and the world."

Read more at http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/ciencia_tecnologia/2010/04/100412_ecuador_glaciares_lp.shtml

The Oily History of Offshore Operations: From Venezuela to the Gulf

By Nikolas Kozloff

Though undoubtedly shocking and disconcerting, the recent BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is hardly the first incident of its kind in the region. Indeed, as I watched the footage of the ominous oil spill approaching the ecologically sensitive coast of Louisiana, I was struck with a profound sense of déjà vu. Long ago, while researching my dissertation on the environmental history of the petroleum industry in Venezuela, I combed through archives and libraries in the U.S., Britain and South America to uncover the oil companies’ sordid past. Starting in the 1920s, American and British subsidiaries of Standard Oil of New Jersey, Gulf and Royal Dutch Shell turned environmentally pristine Lake Maracaibo, which empties out into the Gulf of Venezuela and the Caribbean, into toxic sludge.



Travel to Lake Maracaibo today and you can still see the relics of the pioneering petroleum past: hundreds of offshore oil derricks dot the horizon as far as the eye can see. During the 1920s oil was a messy business and blow-outs, fires and fantastic gushers were a common occurrence. Just as in Louisiana today, the oil industry in Lake Maracaibo put delicate lake-shore mangroves in danger as well as tropical wildlife. The water used by local residents for domestic uses came from the lake itself, and reportedly there was little risk of getting sick from the water as it was clean, such that one could even see the head of a coin or a needle in the water. With the arrival of the oil companies however, the water became dirty.

Read more at http://news.mongabay.com/2010/0501-gulf_oil_kozloff.html

Brazil: MIT Sloan to partner with new research and education effort

In its latest international partnership, the MIT Sloan School of Management is today signing an agreement with Brazil’s newly formed Vale Technological Institute (ITV) to collaborate on a range of academic and research efforts aimed at innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

ITV, which was established in 2009 as a non-profit, post-graduate research and teaching institution by Vale, the world’s second largest diversified mining company, has already begun to recruit students in Brazil. ITV will eventually open three institutes, the first of which will be in the Amazon region of Brazil. “ITV wants to become a leading center for research and training about innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development,” said ITV Director Luiz Mello, the former vice provost at the Federal University of São Paulo. “Since those are also priorities at MIT Sloan, this collaboration will greatly enhance the research and training activities of both institutions.”

Read more at <http://www.pr-inside.com/mit-sloan-to-partner-with-new-r1881320.htm>

Peru: APRA, the official political party, proposes measures against climate change to be mandatory

Accelerated reduction of our glaciers, the consecutive losses in agriculture crops and the increase of emergencies due to natural disasters as a consequence of climate change, have caused the reaction of the government party.

APRA party, at Franklin Sánchez’ initiative, presented a bill to set up the obligatoriness at the Executive, regional, and municipal levels, of implementing adaptation provisions to this climate abnormality.

Thus, adaptation and mitigation measures are declared of national interest, in order to face this phenomenon effects and reduce their impacts and the vulnerability of our country.

Congress concern arises from the fact that the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research of Great Britain has placed Peru in the third place of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of this abnormality. According to studies of this Centre, in the next years we will have rains and droughts in higher levels to those historically registered, in addition to glacier reduction, which will impact the economy and life quality of Peruvians.

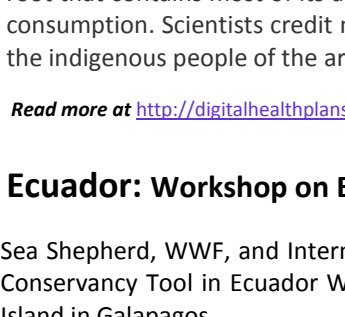
In the last ten years, 72% of emergencies due to natural disasters have been result from climate variations, they indicated. 81% of total agriculture production presents a critical and very critical vulnerability to severe and strong droughts. Nowadays, 27 crops are the most affected by climate events, like potato, corn, rice, banana, bean, yuca, etc. products which are very important for family consumption.

To mitigate these effects, Project proposes that the Executive shall prepare and approve an integral adaptation strategy with a country-wide scope, and restructure the National Committee on Climate Change.

Read more at <http://gestion.pe/impresia/noticia/apra-plantea-hacer-obligatorio-tomar-medidas-contra-cambio-climatico/2010-05-06/17918>

Latin America will need \$572bn for power sector

The rising energy demand has prompted developed economies to find out sustainable solutions to their energy requirements. Considering this, currently, the government policies and renewable energy legislation play a vital role in the development of renewable energy sources. Countries in the South American region are aware of this and have enacted favorable policies to encourage investment in non-conventional energy sources such as wind, solar and biomass.

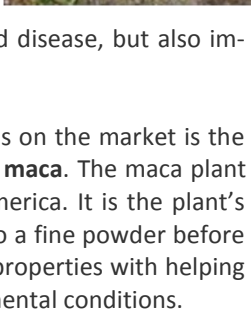


Of the top five countries, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia have formulated legislation to promote renewable energy development. Argentina and Chile have set Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) targets for the implementation of renewable energy sources. In addition to this, a number of governments also provide indirect subsidies and tax credits to promote renewable energy. These policies and support will help the South American countries to achieve rapid growth in renewable energy, as the existing programs and legislations bring significant installed capacity to the market.

Read more at [http://www.commodityonline.com/news/Latin-America-will-need-\\$572bn-for-power-sector-28025-3-1.html](http://www.commodityonline.com/news/Latin-America-will-need-$572bn-for-power-sector-28025-3-1.html)

Peruvian Maca, a Powerful Adaptogen

No matter how hard we try to avoid it, stress is still an everyday part of our lives. It stems from the daily decisions we have to make, from our interactions with the people around us, and from our environment and surroundings. How well we deal with this stress determines how happy, healthy, and fulfilled our lives are. People looking for ways to help achieve such balance will be happy to know that there are all-natural foods capable of boosting your body’s general resistance, making you better equipped to face life’s everyday challenges. Such functional foods



are called adaptogens, which not only boost your immunity to illness and disease, but also impart a feeling of general well being and accomplishment.

Currently, one of the most nutritious, potent and sought after adaptogens on the market is the powdered root of the plant *lepidium peruvianum*, more popularly known **maca**. The maca plant is grown in the forbidding altitudes of the Andes Mountains of South America. It is the plant’s root that contains most of its active ingredient, and it is often crushed into a fine powder before consumption. Scientists credit maca powder’s special immunity boosting properties with helping the indigenous people of the area adapt and thrive in such harsh environmental conditions.

Read more at <http://digitalhealthplans.com/?tag=south-america>

Ecuador: Workshop on Environmental Law ends in Galapagos

Sea Shepherd, WWF, and International Conservancy took part in the “Environmental Law as a Conservancy Tool in Ecuador Workshop” addressed to judicial officers and held at Santa Cruz Island in Galapagos.

The opening was held by minister Washington Pesántez, who announced the intention of creating the first prosecutor’s office specialized on environment, as this type of crime is one of the most lucrative illegal practices.

On the other hand, Édgar Muñoz, Director of the Galapagos National Park, entity responsible for the administration of these protected areas, presented the management policies applied since this institution was created to preserve island ecosystems in the best manner.

As well, Óscar Cortez, responsible for Legal Advisory of the Park, explained the legal framework protecting the environment, and highlighted that the Organic Law of the Special Regime for the Sustainable Conservancy and Development of the Galapagos Province, typified the environmental crimes, as the current Constitution of the Republic, called the “Green Constitution”, guarantees Nature’s rights.

Read more at <http://www.eluniverso.com/2010/05/11/1/1447/culmino-taller-derecho-ambiental-galapagos.html>

South American Educators Meet to Redefine Their Sociopolitical Role

Soon, teachers and educators across Latin America and Spain will be attending the Fifth Ibero-American Conference of Teachers, Educators and Researchers (Quinto Encuentro Iberoamericano de Colectivos y Redes de Maestros que Hacen Investigacion e Innovacion Desde Su Escuela y Comunidad). One of their objectives is to make teachers and educators authors of and protagonists for the emancipation of the educational process. The hope is that teachers can expand their influence beyond the limits of their school rooms; that they can mobilize and organize to the extent that a pedagogy of emancipation can spread beyond school walls and influence the socio-educational and political realms.

Participating in this year’s event will be representatives from Argentina, Spain, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Brasil. Representatives and teachers from Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua are also expected to attend and participate. The Venezuelan chapter will host the event this year. Its National Coordinator is Professor Mirna Sojo Sojo. She will be assisted by Maritza Lopez, Arturo Perez and a host of other dedicated and forward thinking educators. While discussing the conference with Professor Sojo and when perusing the informational materials that have been distributed, the theme of emancipating the educational process is a recurring one. But emancipating it from what, some might ask? Could the answer be status quo governments? Many in the United States are convinced that the educational process is not geared toward developing people but controlling them and preparing them to perform tasks that serve the interests of government and big business. Apparently this train of thought is prevalent in other countries as well. Could it be that progressive educators in the United States can look to educators in South America for a measure of guidance?

The aims of the conference include deepening the interchange of experiences among teachers from the participating countries, strengthening the learning experience and teaching techniques, recognizing the teaching experiences that promote forms of organization, articulating proposals that perpetuate the production and sharing of knowledge between teachers and communities, recognizing the educational experiences that spring from the communities and empowering the conference’s mobilization movement within the participating countries.

Read more at <http://www.blackafrika.net/2010/05/09/south-american-educators-meet-to-redefine-their-sociopolitical-role/>

REO Hub and ESTH Outreach

May 10-12, 2010 XIX Annual Latin American Energy Conference, The La Jolla Conference - La Jolla, California

May 13-14, 2010 REO accompanied USAID colleagues for the Country Development Cooperation Strategy Stakeholder Interview in Madre de Dios.

May 19-20, 2010 REO invited to participate in the “Environmental and Social Tools to Reduce the Impacts of Hydrocarbon Projects in the Peruvian Amazon” Forum, organized by E-Tech International in Cusco, Peru.

June, 2010 Regional Marine Protected Areas Workshop Series – Lima, Peru

July, 2010 Regional Marine Protected Areas Workshop Series – Quito, Ecuador

July 14-17, 2010 International Conference on Biodiversity Conservation in Transboundary Tropical Forests – Quito, Ecuador

July, 2010 Roundtable on Climate Change and Disaster Preparation *(dates to be confirmed)*

Ago 5-8, 2010 International Seminar on Science, organized by CEPRECYT and INICTEL-UNI – Lima, Peru

Ago 5-8, 2010 IX International Meeting on Science –Lima, Peru

Ago 16, 2010 Roundtable on Low Carbon Sustainable Economies, South American Perspective—Lima, Peru

Oct 4-10, 2010 X Latin American Congress on Botany - La Serena, Chile

Oct 13, 2010 IV COBER and II ECC International Fair 2010 on Clean Technologies, and Efficient Use of Energy, organized by FONAM in Lima, Peru

U.S. Climate Change Bills

HR 2996

Rep. Norman Dicks [D-WA6] – Dep. of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010

Oct 30, 2009 – Became Public Law No: 111-88. Read about this law here: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2996>

S. 1733

Sen. John Kerry [D-MA] – Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act.

Sep 30, 2009 – Introduced (referred to Senate Environment and Public Works Committee)

Nov 5, 2009: Committee on Environment and Public Works. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.

Feb 2, 2010: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Track this bill here: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s111-1733>

HR 2454

Rep. Henry Waxman [D-CA30] – American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009.

May 15, 2009 – Introduced (referred to 15 different committees: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2454&tab=committees>

May 21, 2009 – Reported by committee (2 proposed amendments:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2454&tab=amendments>)

June 26, 2009 – Passed House. Bill now goes to Senate vote.

July 7, 2009 – Read the second time. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 97. Track this bill here: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2454>

The information contained herein was gathered from news sources from across the region, and the views expressed below do not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Environmental HUB Office or of our constituent posts.

Addressees interested in sharing any ESTH-related events of USG interest are welcome to do so. For questions or comments, please contact us at quevedoa@state.gov.